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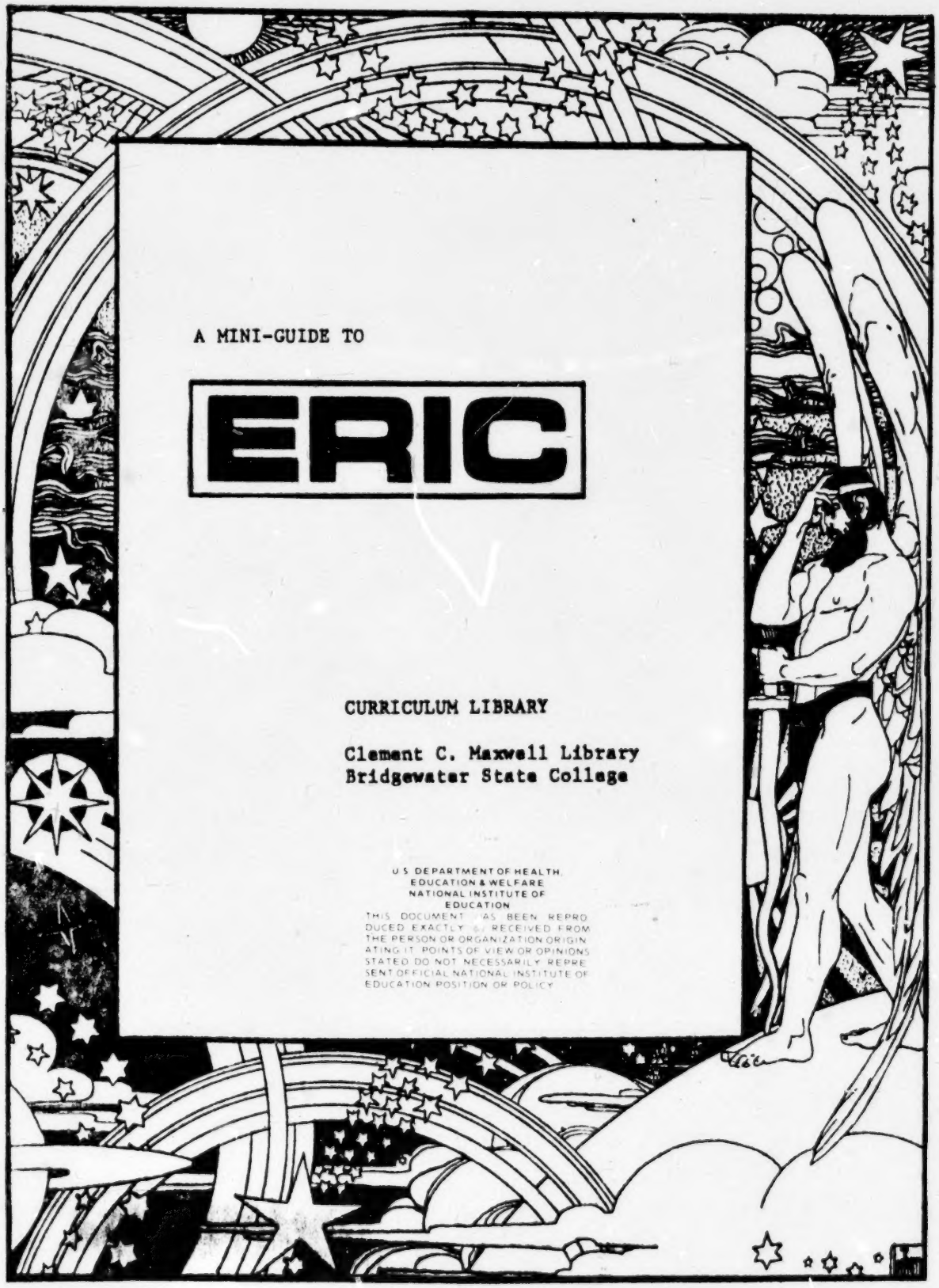
ABSTRACT

A question-and-answer format is utilized to provide library patron with a brief orientation to the use of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) publication Resources in Education (RIE). Topics covered include the nature of the ERIC system and an explanation of microfiche and related equipment such as: microfiche readers, reader/printers, the Remkard machine, and microfiche reproduction equipment. The instructional material on the use of the ERIC collection includes the use of cumulated indexes, the use of the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors to determine subject headings, and the problem of documents not available from EDRS, the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Special instructions for using the ERIC collection at the Clement C. Maxwell Library of Bridgewater State College, Massachusetts, are included. (SL)



A MINI-GUIDE TO

ERIC

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A MINI-GUIDE TO ERIC

by

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WHAT IS ERIC?

The acronym ERIC stands for Educational Resources Information Center.

ERIC is a national information system established by the United States Office of Education in June 1964. Its purpose is to collect, process and make available documents and reports in the field of education.

Included in the system are sixteen clearinghouses, each specializing in a particular area of education. The materials processed by each of these clearinghouses are channeled to a central unit, the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, where they are reproduced and distributed to subscribers, such as the Clement C. Maxwell Library.

WHAT ARE MICROFICHE?

Documents are reproduced by ERIC and shipped to the library in the form of microfiche. Microfiche are 4 inch by 6 inch sheets of film with the pages of the document photographed and highly reduced in size. A microfiche may hold up to 96 pages. Documents longer than 96 pages are continued on successive sheets of film. Machinery is available in the Curriculum Library for reading and copying film documents.

The ERIC microfiche collection is stored in filing cabinets located in the Curriculum Library. At present, there are close to ninety thousand titles in the collection, and a shipment of about twelve hundred new titles is received each month.

WHAT MATERIALS ARE INCLUDED?

Materials contained in the collection include such things as program reports, research reports, conference proceedings, bibliographies, professional papers and curriculum materials. Generally speaking, the collection does not include periodical articles or trade publications. A typical ERIC document has not been published extensively before its inclusion.

HOW ARE THE DOCUMENTS ARRANGED?

Each film report has an ED number in the upper left hand corner. ED stands for ERIC document. Reports are arranged in the cabinet drawers by their ED numbers. Locating a report once its number is known is simply a matter of searching the cabinet drawer containing the range of numbers which includes the desired item. The film may then be taken from the drawer and viewed in a reading machine.

HOW CAN I LOCATE DOCUMENTS ON MY SUBJECT?

Numerous indexes are available for searching the collection by subject, author or sponsoring institution. The most comprehensive of these indexes is called Research In Education (starting January 1975 the title will be Resources In Education). Research In Education is issued monthly, corresponding to the monthly shipments of documents.

The first section of each monthly issue consists of a resumé for each document issued that month, arranged by ED number. It should be mentioned that the same resumés found in Research In Education may also be found in three other places:

1. On the first page of the document itself.
2. In cumulative volumes called ERIC Educational Documents Abstracts.
3. In the Remkard Machine. Remkard will be described later on.

The second section of Research In Education consists of various indexes, including a subject index. Under each subject heading, appropriate report titles and their ED numbers are listed.

The index section to Research In Education is cumulated semi-annually and annually. There are also cumulative volumes which cover a span of several years. One volume covers 1966 through 1969, while another covers 1970 and 1971.

To search a given topic, therefore, it is not necessary to consult monthly issues of Research In Education for those periods covered by the cumulative indexes. The monthly issues are necessary, however, to look up the most current material which has not yet been cumulated.

THREE BASIC STEPS.

Looking up information in the ERIC microfiche collection is a simple three step procedure. First, look up your subject in the indexes and take down the ED numbers of those reports which apply. Second, find the reports in the microfiche files. And third, view the reports on a microfiche reader.

WHAT SUBJECT HEADING SHOULD I USE?

Often persons using ERIC are uncertain what subject terms to use for locating material on their topic. For example, someone doing research on "hearing impaired children" would not find that term listed in the indexes, and might wrongly conclude that there is no material on that topic.

If you have difficulty identifying your topic, consult the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors. The Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors is an authority list of, and a cross reference guide to, the subject headings used in various ERIC indexes.

Using the example already noted, if you look up the term "hearing impaired children" in the thesaurus, it will instruct you to use the term Aurally Handicapped, instead. Under the term Aurally Handicapped, the thesaurus lists narrower terms, broader terms and related terms, all of which will provide additional material if searched in the indexes.

The Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors serves two important functions. First, it directs you to the correct term for locating material on your topic. Second, it provides cross references to additional terms which relate to your topic.

MISSING DOCUMENTS.

An occurrence which puzzles many ERIC users is that they will look up a particular document in the indexes, only to discover that it is not included in the microfiche files. This happens because many items listed in the indexes have not been reproduced on microfiche. Typically, items not on microfiche are copyrighted and are available through other sources. If you fail to find the document you are searching for in the files, look up its resumé. If the document was not reproduced on ERIC microfiche, the resumé will include the note, "Not available from EDRS." EDRS stands for ERIC document reproduction service.

EQUIPMENT

Once you have searched your topic in the ERIC indexes and have located your reports in the microfiche files, you are ready to use the readers, reader/printers and other related equipment.

The microfiche reader enlarges the image printed on the film and projects it onto a screen, permitting the document to be read page by page.

The microfiche reader/printer is like a reader, with the added capability of making paper reproductions of individual pages from microfiche documents.

In addition to the reader/printers, which make paper copies, the library also has equipment which will make film duplicates of the microfiche itself. This service is particularly useful to persons who have reading machines available to them at some other location. The Curriculum Library staff will make film copies upon request.

A machine called Remkard can save you much time if used correctly. Remkard contains the resumés for most of the documents included in the ERIC system. By pushing buttons corresponding to an ED number, the resumé for that document is made to appear on a projection screen. A person using Remkard can quickly read the resumés for the titles listed under his subject in the indexes. Usually, the resumé provides sufficient information to determine if a document will be useful to your particular project. This allows you to separate the wheat from the chaff before going through the effort of searching the microfiche files and setting films up on reading machines. Instructions for using Remkard are attached to the face of the machine.

POINTS TO REMEMBER.

If you have any doubt regarding what term to look under, consult the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors to establish the correct subject heading before looking in the indexes.

Use the cumulative indexes for those years which are complete, rather than searching monthly issues of Research In Education. Consult the monthly issues of the most current indexes which have not yet been cumulated.

If you do not find a document in the microfiche files, locate its resumé to determine if it is one of those not available from the ERIC document reproduction service.

If you are going over substantial amounts of material, use Remkard to locate the resumés of desired reports, saving yourself the effort of searching for films which are inappropriate to your project.

If you have any questions or problems, do not hesitate to ask the Curriculum Library staff for assistance. They are there to help you.